

## Col. Frank M. Hume Wartime Commander of Maine's 103rd Inspired Local Legion Post

Less than a year after the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, the Chester L. Briggs Post, American Legion was organized and the inspiration for its founding came from none other than the wartime commander of the 103rd Regiment, Col. Frank M. Hume himself.

Col. Hume had attended the Paris caucus out of which the American Legion grew and he became much interested in the formation of a post in his home town. Accordingly, soon after his return home, he got together with Maj. Elson A. (Bill) Hosford, who had left Houlton for war service as the commanding officer of the L. Company of Houlton.

### STATE DEPT. FORMED

These two veterans who had seen service together overseas, called together a group of returned soldiers who were interested in the formation of a Legion Post in Houlton. A State Department headquarters had previously been established in Waterville with James L. Boyle as adjutant, a position he still holds.

It required little time to secure the necessary application and instructions for forming a post here. At a second meeting of the group, held in August, 1919, an application for a charter was signed and forwarded to Waterville. It bore the signatures of the following 15 men:

Frank M. Hume, Elson A. Hosford, Harris B. McIntyre, Clement J. Carroll, Lee M. Friedman, James C. Madigan, Paul H. Powers, Walter A. Powers, Robert H. Williams, Paul L. Ketchum, Beecher Hammond, Lawrence A. Russell, Charles R. Barton, Bertam L. Chadwick and Dr. John G. Potter.

### APPLICATION APPROVED

The application was approved by the Department Secretary on

September 12th and by the National Secretary three days later. On the 19th of September 1918, a charter was in order, signed by Adj. James L. Boyle and Frank M. Hume and the 47th Legion Post to be organized in Maine came into being in Houlton.

It was named for Pfc. Chester L. Briggs, a member of Company L, 103rd Infantry, who was killed by a direct artillery hit on June 16th, 1918 in a dugout near Bouconville, France. He was the first Houlton boy to lose his life while serving with the American Forces in World War One.

With the vigor expected of a new post, the young group immediately became active and expanded. During the year 1920 the membership had reached 111.

The following officers were elected to serve the Chester L. Briggs Post for the first year of its operation here: Commander, Charles R. Barton; Vice Commander, Wellie Dunphy; Adjutant; Hector J. Carpenter, finance officer, James Skehan.

### BOXING MATCHES HELD

In the early years of its life when it had no regular quarters, the post was fortunate in being permitted the use of the old fire house on Water street. In order to earn money, several boxing matches were held in the quarters, which turned out to be profitable. With this money, fittings and furniture was purchased and Chester L. Briggs Post seemed well launched on a secure future.

Two years later the tide of success had suddenly turned. Adversities struck the post in the form of lost quarters and a declining membership that sunk to a low of 63 in 1923. Things looked bad for retention of the charter, so low had the interest and enthusiasm dropped.

During this trying period the Post was held together by the determination of a handful of members. An Auxiliary had been formed in 1921 and to this loyal and hard working group must go considerable of the credit for

keeping the Post from falling apart.

### STUBBORN FEW BATTLED

During the months of late 1922, through all of 1923 and into the early months of 1924, meetings were held on a catch-as-catch-can basis, in offices and homes or wherever else it was possible to gather together enough members to call it a meeting. The stubborn few battled grimly to keep the Post alive and set its course back toward a more healthy state.

The break came in the Spring of 1924, largely through the efforts of the Auxiliary, who were able to secure a small hall in the Haley block, now the Day block, on Main street. At first the task seemed hopeless as the membership rolls declined to 48. For the next few years the Post hung on by a mere thread, yet it did continue to exist, despite a lack of enthusiasm among the officers who could be induced to serve, and a complete absence of interest in the organization on the part of eligible war veterans in the area.

In 1930 the National Legion convention was held in Boston. This was near enough to arouse some interest among the local Legionnaires and several from Houlton attended. It was quite an inspiring experience and they brought back a renewed spirit to breathe some new life into the Chester L. Briggs Post.

### DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS

First step took the form of organization of a drum and bugle corps after the visitors had seen and approved of the snap and dash exhibited by those corps who had paraded in Boston. With the State Department slated to convene in Calais in 1931, a drive was immediately started to get a corps organized in time to attend that affair.

A small unit was started in February, 1931 with A. E. (Zeke) Holden as music director and the late Perley Lovely as drum instructor. The men worked and rehearsed hard and made their first local appearance on Memorial Day. In June they participated in the first state department convention at Calais.

A drum and bugle competition had been scheduled but only the Saco and Houlton units made an appearance. The first result was a tie and they were obliged to take the field again. On the second run it was discovered that

two members of the Houlton Corps were attired in Houlton band uniforms. The result was that Houlton lost by a scant two points.

### STATE DEPT. CONVENTION

The membership having risen to 83, the Houlton Post was encouraged to invite the State Department to convene in the Shiretown for their 1932 sessions. The invitation was accepted and, with this inspiration, the membership zoomed to a high of 115.

Great preparations were made for the occasion and an active committee was named by Roland Hovey who was post commander that year. The convention was held June 23-24 and members and delegates from 95 posts thronged into Houlton. With them came the cream of the state's bugle and drum corps, from Saco, Biddeford, Lewiston, Rockland, Richmond, Bar Harbor, Eastport, Lubec and Lincoln.

The parade with all these units, plus the host corps, and visiting Legionnaires with all their fanfare and monkeyshines, was something to behold, setting a new record for this community.

### SPECTACULAR EVENT

The drum and bugle corps competition was a spectacular event. The Chester L. Briggs Corps, marshalled by the late Frederic B. Vose and featuring the drumming of Ian McCartney, won all the honors. Being the host corps, it was unable to accept the prize, which was awarded to Biddeford.

For the next 10 years the affairs of the post continued at an even pace with no great increases or decreases in the rolls. The death of Frank Putnam in 1938 was the signal for the start of a series of International get-togethers with Woodstock Legionnaires that was continued for many years afterward.

### INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

"Happy" Putnam, as he was known by all, had served with the Canadian Army, but he was a member of the Chester L. Briggs Post, American Legion. The Woodstock Post of the Canadian Legion was invited to have charge of the military funeral, a gesture that was promptly accepted. A contingent of 18 to 20 men crossed the line on a bitter cold winter day to pay their respects to their dead comrade.

Transportation was provided by

Capt. Clement J. Carroll, 152nd Field Artillery, of Houlton, and it included long sleds and double teams to make the rugged 12 mile trek. It was anything but a comfortable experience but was made without complaint.

The outgrowth of this courtesy was a return invitation from Woodstock for a joint dinner and field day with them the following summer. This, too, was accepted and there was then begun a series of international meetings annually for many years.

The event was reported to national headquarters with the result that similar practices were recommended for posts all along the border.

### STATE CONCLAVE AGAIN

The State Department was invited to return here again, in 1940 for their annual conclave. Bands, drum and bugle corps, drill teams, 40 and 8 members and their locomotive, uniformed Legionnaires and Voyageurs thronged into and overflowed this community. Houlton was to witness more color and glamor at this gathering than it had ever entertained before.

Members of the entertaining post were pushed to the extreme to find accommodations for the thousands who sought it. All available rooms within 15 miles were utilized. It was a big job and it was accomplished with an enormous amount of work. It proved one thing; in the future towns the size of Houlton could not be expected to cope with a convention of the growing Legion body in Maine.

Once again the influence of a state convention was felt on the membership of the local post, which arose to more than 100 for the fifth time in its history.

### WORLD WAR TWO

This was on the eve of the outbreak of World War Two which was again to demand that the youth of our country go forth to fight on foreign soil. Not many of the veterans of World War One were physically qualified to return to active service, yet several did and served with distinction.

Many joined the newly formed State Guard as a means of doing their part, being thus prepared to defend their homeland if the emergency arose.

The aftermath of World War Two saw an amendment to the national constitution of the Legion which made veterans of the new war eligible for member-

## A Famous Rifle Team of Old "L" Company



The men of the famous old Company L which was a part of Houlton for so many years, were expert marksmen and distinguished themselves in many a competition. This picture is supposed to have been taken around 1902 while the outfit was at camp. Capt. Ralph Whitney is seated in the center, on his right, kneeling, are Frank Hussey and George T. Clark. Clark is reputed to have finished second once in a national rifle competition. On the captain's left are, Billy Glen and Elson A. "Bill" Hosford. Standing left to right, Osgood Smith, Frank Dyer, Frank Chamberlain, Ben Batchelder and Harry Perry.

## THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

The Text of Advertising as it was written  
for local merchants in the first year of  
the new century.

W. H. McLOON  
Cigar Manufacturer

A first class cigar and tobacco emporium where a cigar maker of 30 years experience makes the famous "River Driver" and "5-80-4" five cent cigars and the "McLoon's Daddy", which is his ten cent brand. Mr. McLoon, a native of Rockland, owns the establishment which is in roomy quarters with handsome fixtures of

to which he has been obliged to move due to the expansion of his business. If your knife, scissors, edge tools or skates need sharpening or fixing up, locks repaired or keys fitted, rifles cleaned, repaired and made to look as good as new or any kind of lathe work executed in a satisfactory manner and, last but not least, if your bicycle is in any way demoralized, then Mr. Cates is just the individual to consult.

reaching or interfering horse, the ironing of a vehicle or general blacksmithing of any character should consult Mr. Ralph Whitney whose headquarters are on Mechanic street.

S. FRIEDMAN & CO.  
Men's Clothing

This establishment is the natural headquarters for clothing of every description, from boys knee pants to suit or overcoat of up-to-date pattern and reasonable quality, with a nobby hat to top the bargain, and a pair of boots or shoes unexcelled in quality and style. Mr. Simon Friedman, a native of Germany, is the genial proprietor of this firm, having been its head since coming to Houlton in 1880. The store is in

Compliments  
of  
**HAT'S**  
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DRIVE-IN

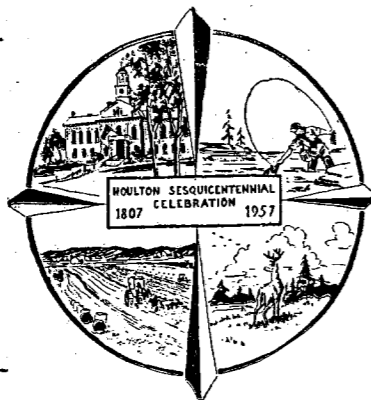
considerable of the credit for second run it was discovered that Transportation was provided by



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on your 100 YEARS of  
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AROOSTOOK COUNTY ...

CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THE TOWN  
OF  
HOULTON



ON THIS  
YOUR  
150th  
BIRTHDAY

PRESQUE ISLE STAR-HERALD  
PRESQUE ISLE ... MAINE

Legion which made veterans of the new war eligible for membership, the result being a swelling of the Legion's ranks by returning veterans.

In the years 1941 the Chester L. Briggs Post finally achieved their ambition of owning their own home. They purchased the former Edblad home on Pleasant street and started a remodeling program to make it into a comfortable and commodious headquarters.

The next decade saw the post conduct its affairs in a fairly active manner and carry on the duties of an average Legion Post. At the termination of World War Two there was a noticeable increase in the membership rolls which reached the second highest in the history of the post in the mid-fifties. In 1955 the membership had climbed to 138, which won the Chester L. Briggs Post an honor ribbon and a citation.

#### FIRST JULY FOURTH

The first July Fourth celebration to be sponsored by the Chester L. Briggs Post was in 1950. It was so successful that the post was able, with the profit they had earned, to make extensive renovations on their home, add a brick section to the building to make a large meeting room and dining room in place of the several smaller rooms.

In addition, a new heating plant was installed, a new lighting system and a completely new kitchen added at a total cost of over \$7,000.

During the years 1952 and 1953 a new concrete wall was built around the kitchen, a recreation room was installed, new chairs purchased and other minor repairs were made. In 1956 new steel chairs were purchased bearing an embossed Legion emblem, and also collapsible tables.

These improvements have added to the accommodations so that now the Legion home can accommodate as many as 80 people at one sitting.

The Post has contributed \$600 to be used by the recreation committee towards a swimming pool and also has found time and funds to revive the Junior Legion baseball team, an aggregation that so far has been successful in winning two county championships.

In all of its long history in Houlton, the Chester L. Briggs Post has consistently been active in town affairs and interested in the welfare of veterans. They have contributed to the activities of young people and have generally been a great credit to the town.

ers with handsome fixtures of quartered oak. He has a really methodical method of displaying cigars, cigarettes and smokers articles in general as only those addicted to the weed can appreciate. It might appropriately be called a smokers' retreat.

#### HARRY M. CATES

Machinist

A first class machinist and repairer of bicycles is to be found in the quarters of H. M. Cates in Union Square, next to the laundry

ual to consult.

#### RALPH H. WHITNEY

Blacksmith

Blacksmiths may not be machinists in a strict sense, yet a thorough workman at the former trade is often of more service than the latter, for he is able to fashion a shoe for an animal, or iron work for a carriage to a nicely far better than the individual who is dependent on machinery. For this reason those who are seeking first class service, whether it be the shoeing of a tender-footed over-

Houlton in 1880. The store is in the Rice block at the corner of Court streets and Market Square.

#### HOULTON BUSINESS COLLEGE

Practical business instruction

Prof. O. A. Hodgins is the proprietor of this popular school located in the Pioneer building which specializes in offering a complete business training, banking in all its forms, typewriting, stenography, shorthand and book-keeping methods. Many of its graduates have secured positions of trust and honor, which reflects

## EVER CHANGING FASHION ... NEVER CHANGING COURTESY



... Styles have changed from year to year, inventions and new ways of doing things. We have kept up with the styles and the trends from year to year. We also have tried to maintain a never changing policy of courtesy to our customers. You are always welcome to stop in and see us.

CONGRATULATIONS HOULTON  
on this your 150th BIRTHDAY

... AND TO THE HOULTON  
PIONEER TIMES FOR  
100 YEARS OF SERVICE  
IN AROOSTOOK COUNTY ...



# Bell Shops

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Houlton